

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
calls for freedom for Cuban 5
— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 77/NO. 27 JULY 15, 2013

Successful drive expands readership in working class

BY LOUIS MARTIN

Supporters of the *Militant* in the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and United Kingdom completed a successful eight-week international subscription campaign. During the final week 360 subscriptions were sold, bringing our total to 2,784.

**ACTIVE WORKERS
EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE**
— See article, p. 9

The subscription effort centered on talking about working-class politics with workers door to door in their neighborhoods, introducing them to the socialist newsweekly, to books and pamphlets like *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*, and to socialist election campaigns

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Spring 'Militant' subscription campaign May 4 - July 2 (Final Chart)

Country	quota	sold	%	2,784
UNITED STATES				
Seattle	160	176	110%	
Houston	140	151	108%	
Miami	90	94	104%	
Philadelphia	140	146	104%	
Twin Cities	140	146	104%	
Lincoln	25	26	104%	
Los Angeles	175	182	104%	
San Francisco	180	187	104%	
New York	425	430	101%	
Omaha	90	91	101%	
Chicago	180	181	101%	
Des Moines	140	140	100%	
Washington	90	86	96%	
Boston	65	55	85%	
Atlanta	160	125	78%	
Total US	2,200	2,216	101%	
PRISONERS	15	12	80%	
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	160	167	104%	
Manchester	100	107	107%	
UK Total	260	274	105%	
CANADA	120	121	101%	
NEW ZEALAND	70	79	113%	
AUSTRALIA	80	82	103%	
International goal			2,800	
Total sold			2,784	

Build defense campaign to free the Cuban Five!

Join us in mobilizing support in the U.S. and worldwide for the defense campaign to win freedom for all the Cuban Five — Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González.

EDITORIAL

The “crime” for which these five Cuban revolutionaries were framed up and imprisoned some 15 years ago by the U.S. government was volunteering to come to this country to monitor activity by counterrevolutionary Cuban-American groups.

Operating on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, these outfits have a long record of violent assaults on Cuba and supporters of Cuba’s socialist revolution there, in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, and elsewhere. During their trials and ever since, the Five have affirmed their determination and pride in doing their part to head off provocations that could have served as a pretext for military action by Washington against Cuba.

By no choice of their own, the Five

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Massive anti-government actions erupt across Egypt

Rulers from Tunisia to Turkey watch warily



Top: Reuters/Mohamed Abd El Ghany
Inset: Reuters/Asmaa Waguih

June 30 protests demand Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi resign. Top, Cairo’s Tahrir Square; inset, Alexandria.

BY SETH GALINSKY

Demanding the resignation of Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi, demonstrators have been pouring into the streets of Egypt in huge numbers not seen since the overthrow of the U.S.-backed military dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak. Behind the outpouring is growing discontent over the impact on tens of millions of the deepening capital-

ist economic crisis, as well as attempts by Morsi and his Muslim Brotherhood to restrict democratic rights.

The Muslim Brotherhood called counterprotests to back the president, some in the hundreds of thousands, and clashes between the two sides are reportedly escalating.

Meanwhile, the military high com-

Continued on page 6

Thousands in Texas condemn bill targeting woman’s right to choose



John Anderson/Austin Chronicle

Thousands take to streets July 1 after Texas Gov. Rick Perry organizes second effort in state legislature to pass prohibition on all abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy.

BY SUSAN LAMONT

Some 5,000 supporters of women’s right to choose abortion demonstrated at the Texas Capitol in Austin July 1 to protest the legislature’s impending passage of a bill that would impose new restrictions on abortion.

The bill passed June 24 by the Texas House of Representatives includes a ban on abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy and a requirement that clinics performing the procedure meet hospital-style building

Continued on page 9

Bay Area strike shuts down rail transit system

BY ERIC SIMPSON

COLMA, Calif. — “Some 2,375 Bay Area Rapid Transit workers from two unions went on strike early Monday morning July 1. The main issues are wages and company demands to raise workers’ health care payments and institute contributions for the retirement plan.

Negotiators for the Service Em-

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Independence for Puerto Rico! Free Oscar López, Cuban Five!

Socialist Workers Party testifies at UN hearing

Below are excerpts from the statement presented by Tom Baumann on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party to the June 17 U.N. Special Committee on Decolonization. The committee, in a unanimously adopted resolution, reaffirmed “the inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence” from U.S. rule.

Distinguished Chairman and honored committee members:

The Socialist Workers Party joins with the thousands who in recent weeks have been speaking out to demand that the U.S. government release Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López Rivera.

Oscar has been locked up on trumped-up charges of “seditious conspiracy” for more than 32 years, including 12 in solitary confinement — longer even than South African freedom fighter Nelson Mandela was jailed by the apartheid regime.

We also celebrate the fact that René González, one of the five Cuban revolutionaries framed up by Washington, is now free after serving nearly 15 years in the U.S. prison system. René was able to use his hard-won freedom to join a protest in Havana demanding Oscar López’s release. We call on the U.S. government to free the remaining four Cubans: Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando González. The Five are heroes to millions around the world because of their example of unbreakable courage,

dignity and integrity. My *independentista* brothers and sisters here have effectively described the devastating reality of U.S. colonial rule over Puerto Rico. They have explained why independence from Washington is a necessity for the people of that Latin American nation, if they are to freely determine their own future. I would like to add one important fact — that a successful fight for Puerto Rico’s independence is also in the interests of the vast majority of the people of the United States.

The people of Puerto Rico and working people in the United States have common interests. We have a common enemy — the U.S. government and the capitalist ruling class it defends. And we share a common struggle — to get those exploiters off our backs. As long as U.S. imperialism controls Puerto Rico, their oppressive hand is strengthened everywhere, putting working people in the United States, too, in a weaker position to fight for our interests.

As the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Miami, I have been going door to door throughout working-class neighborhoods, discussing the big questions that affect working people. One of the things I’ve noticed is greater receptivity among fellow workers to the fight for the release of the Puerto Rican political prisoners and the Cuban Five.

Why? Because millions of working people here have had firsthand experience with the cops, courts and prisons of the capitalist justice system. Among



Isamar Abreu

Protest in San Juan, Puerto Rico, against visit to island by President Barack Obama, June 14, 2011. Demonstrators called for independence as well as freedom for Oscar López.

workers, especially those who are Black or of other oppressed nationalities, there is hardly a family that doesn’t have some relative or acquaintance who has been in prison or is on probation or parole.

In the U.S., 97 percent of men and women in federal prisons today have never been tried and convicted of any crime. They were blackmailed with the threat of very heavy sentences into pleading guilty to some crime, often different from the one they were arrested for. This is the process cynically named “plea bargaining.”

At the same time, working people in the U.S. are facing the brunt of the capitalist economic crisis — from persistently high long-term unemployment to the unrelenting efforts by the bosses to drive down our wages and living conditions. The 4 million Puerto Ricans living in this country, who face systematic discrimination, are among those devastated by this crisis.

The bosses’ offensive is beginning to generate some resistance by working people. Coal miners have been mobilizing by the thousands to defend their union, pensions and health care benefits. We have seen similar examples of working-class resistance and solidarity, from school bus drivers in New York City to dockworkers in Oregon and Washington state.

It is among fighting workers in the U.S. that support will be won for the fight to free the Puerto Rican political prisoners and the struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico.

The capitalist rulers never stop trying

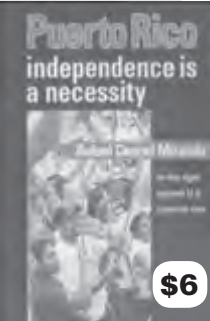
to convince working people here that we need them in order to run society. Likewise, they try to convince the Puerto Rican people that they cannot survive without dependence on Washington. On both counts, that is a lie.

The Cuban Revolution is living proof that when workers and farmers take political power out of the hands of the capitalist minority, they can use that power to win genuine independence and reorganize society in the interests of the vast majority. For more than 54 years, the Cuban people have successfully defended their freedom in face of Washington’s relentless assaults. The example of Cuba’s socialist revolution offers a way forward to working people everywhere, including right here in the United States.

Mr. Chairman, this committee’s condemnation of U.S. colonial rule over Puerto Rico will serve the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people of the United States, and of those everywhere who fight for self-determination and against oppression.

Puerto Rican independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda speaks out on the brutal reality of U.S. colonial domination, the campaign to free Puerto Rican political prisoners and the example of Cuba’s socialist revolution.

www.pathfinderpress.com



THE MILITANT

Workers need an independent political course

Through door-to-door campaigning and sales of the ‘Militant,’ Socialist Workers Party candidates and their supporters are talking with working people about the need to break with the bosses’ Democratic and Republican parties and chart an independent working-class political course.



Militant/Tamar Rosenfeld

Dan Fein (right), SWP candidate for New York mayor, discusses campaign with Kirk Gammon in East New York, June 16.

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☐ \$20 for 6 months

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Submissions to the *Militant* may be published in the newspaper in print and digital format. By submitting, authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*’s views. These are expressed in editorials.

Subscription campaign

Continued from front page

running independent working-class candidates.

In the final stretch, supporters of the paper in Atlanta, Boston, Washington, D.C., and other areas made special efforts to win new readers.

The *Militant*'s supporters talked with thousands of workers about what we need to do to defend working people in face of today's deep capitalist crisis, as well as about the worldwide defense campaign to free the Cuban Five (see facts about this frame-up on page 7) and other political questions.

As the last week of the drive began, more than 150 copies of *The Cuban Five* in three languages had been sold in the U.S. as part of the effort. Readers in Quebec sold 40 copies, including 31 of the new French edition.

Altogether, more than 600 books on working-class politics featured as special offers were sold in the U.S., including well over 100 copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes and of the new Pathfinder Press title, *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own*. (See special offers ad on this page.)

John Studer, SWP candidate for New York City comptroller, told the *Militant* he uses *The Cuban Five* to explain the kind of workers party we need to build, composed and led by working-class fighters like the five Cuban revolutionaries.

Over the last three days of the drive, Studer said, *Militant* supporters in New York sold eight copies of *The Cuban Five*, as well as dozens of subscriptions and other books. "This is part of the worldwide effort to build this defense effort," Studer said.

Studer reported that on Sunday he

and campaign supporter Susan LaMont met with Doreen Richardson, a teacher in the Bronx. "She was interested in the SWP campaign's demands for a massive public works program to put millions to work building things workers need, like schools, hospitals and child care centers," Studer said.

"We discussed how a working-class movement fighting for jobs — and for a big increase in the federal minimum wage — would strengthen our unity and combativity in face of intensified competition among us due to high unemployment, the bosses' superexploitation of immigrant workers and other divisions that drive down wages and conditions of all working people.

"Richardson was also interested in the Cuban Five," Studer said. "She thought they should be freed and wanted to learn more about the Cuban Revolution. Along with a year's subscription and book on the Five, she bought *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*."

Supporters of the paper are holding picnics and other get-togethers to celebrate the successful subscription effort with all those who joined the campaign and look forward to continuing doing so.

Montreal reader Myriam Marceau, a university student working over the summer at a senior home, participated June 25 in her first door-to-door sale. At first nobody was answering their door, she said, but "eventually we found people interested in talking about their experiences as workers, or their political opinions, and ended up selling a subscription and a single copy at the last two doors."

"The *Militant* doesn't just talk about America, it reports on the world," said Panni Hunt, a port trucker at the Toll Group in the Port of Los Angeles.



Militant/Clay Dennison

Militant supporter Eleanor García sells *The Cuban Five* and subscription to paper to former coal miner Joseph Jensen during door-to-door sales effort in Huntington, Utah, May 18.

Working people abroad "have ideas and struggles we can learn from." Last December Teamsters Local 848 drivers won the first union contract there.

Hunt organized other *Militant* readers to join him recently to get out the paper to workers at the Green Fleet Systems plant gate, where a Teamsters organizing drive is underway. As part of that effort he bought a copy of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*.

A prisoner in Florida renewed his subscription and wrote, "Thank you for all you do for those of us in prison. Keep up the fight!" Twelve inmates subscribed or renewed during the drive. The *Militant* Prisoners' Fund makes it possible for inmates, often with help from friends or

relatives, to subscribe at a reduced rate of \$6 for six months. Subscriptions are offered free to those with no means to pay.

The effort to win new readers goes on 52 weeks a year. Join us! Call *Militant* supporters in your area (see directory on page 8) or contact us at (212) 244-4899 or themilitant@mac.com.

\$10,000 left in final stretch of Militant Fighting Fund

BY LEA SHERMAN

So far almost \$108,000 has been receipted for the *Militant* Fighting Fund, just \$10,000 from the international goal. All contributions received in the *Militant* office by July 9 will count.

"The capitalist press is underwritten by commodity advertising and other capitalist interests to which it is beholden. The *Militant* is beholden only to the workers and farmers whose struggles it backs and whom it depends on for funds," wrote Joe Swanson, who organizes the fund effort in the Lincoln, Neb., area, in an appeal for contributions that he forwarded to the *Militant*.

The annual drive helps cover basic operating expenses and the fielding of volunteer worker-correspondents to participate in and report on political developments around the world.

Many contributions are coming in from new subscribers who have just learned about the paper.

Pam Wilson, a Houston barber, signed up for a subscription when Socialist Workers Party mayoral candidate Michael Fitzsimmons and controller candidate Jacquie Henderson knocked on her door. "I'd like to help others get this paper. I will bring the issues into the barbershop as soon as I read them," she said, as she took a few subscription blanks to display with the papers. Handing the campaigners a \$20 bill for her introductory subscription, she added, "Here is \$15 more to help get the paper out to more people. Thanks for what you are doing."

From France, Jean-Louis Salfati

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Special offers with 'Militant' subscription

The Cuban Five

Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free
from pages of the 'Militant'
\$3 with subscription (regular \$5)

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions
by Jack Barnes
\$10 with subscription (regular \$24)

The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning

The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism
by Jack Barnes
\$2 with subscription (regular \$3)

We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions

by Thomas Sankara
Speeches from the Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87
\$5 with subscription (regular \$10)

Thomas Sankara Speaks

The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-1987
\$10 with subscription (regular \$24)

See distributors on page 8

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes
\$10 with subscription (regular \$20)

Cuba and Angola

Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own

by Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro; Cuban generals and combatants; Gabriel García Márquez
\$6 with subscription (regular \$12)

Women in Cuba

The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution
by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer
\$10 with subscription (regular \$20)

Women and Revolution

The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution
by Asela de los Santos, Mary-Alice Waters and others
\$3 with subscription (regular \$7)



Voting rights, affirmative action cases decided by Supreme Court

Programs won in struggle chipped away at by rulers

BY JOHN STUDER

In two major decisions released in the final week of its 2012-13 term, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a section of the historic 1965 Voting Rights Act and declined to issue a sweeping ruling in a challenge to the University of Texas at Austin’s “diversity” program, which gives affirmative action consideration to race in admissions.

The Voting Rights Act, passed as the massive proletarian Black rights movement fought to destroy Jim Crow segregation, was a historic gain for the working class. It barred racist discrimination in voting, which had been enforced with brutal violence in the Jim Crow South.

Affirmative action programs guaranteeing that Blacks and women could gain access to jobs, promotion and edu-

cational opportunities long denied them were another important victory for working-class unity.

These programs were conceded by the propertied rulers in the late 1960s and early ’70s on the heels of the overthrow of Jim Crow and in reaction to rebellions in the Black communities of hundreds of cities across the country.

Like all gains wrested by the working class in struggle, over time and in the absence of continuing mobilizations, the rulers have in practice chipped away at and twisted these advances.

On June 24 the Supreme Court handed down a 7-1 decision declining to rule on the constitutionality of the University of Texas at Austin’s diversity program. The challenge was filed by Abigail Fisher, a Caucasian woman who claimed she was rejected by the school in order to make room for Black students. It was sent back to lower courts for reconsideration.

The university was backed by briefs filed by 57 Fortune 500 companies, dozens of other colleges, the NAACP, a number of unions and more than three dozen prominent military officers.

“The national security interest in officer corps diversity must not be threatened by a broad ruling against race-conscious admission,” retired Adm. Bobby Inman, former director of the National Security Agency and deputy director of the CIA, wrote in a *Time* magazine article last October.

While the decision means diversity programs can continue to exist, it stresses courts must give them close appraisal and many opponents of Black rights say they will step up court challenges.

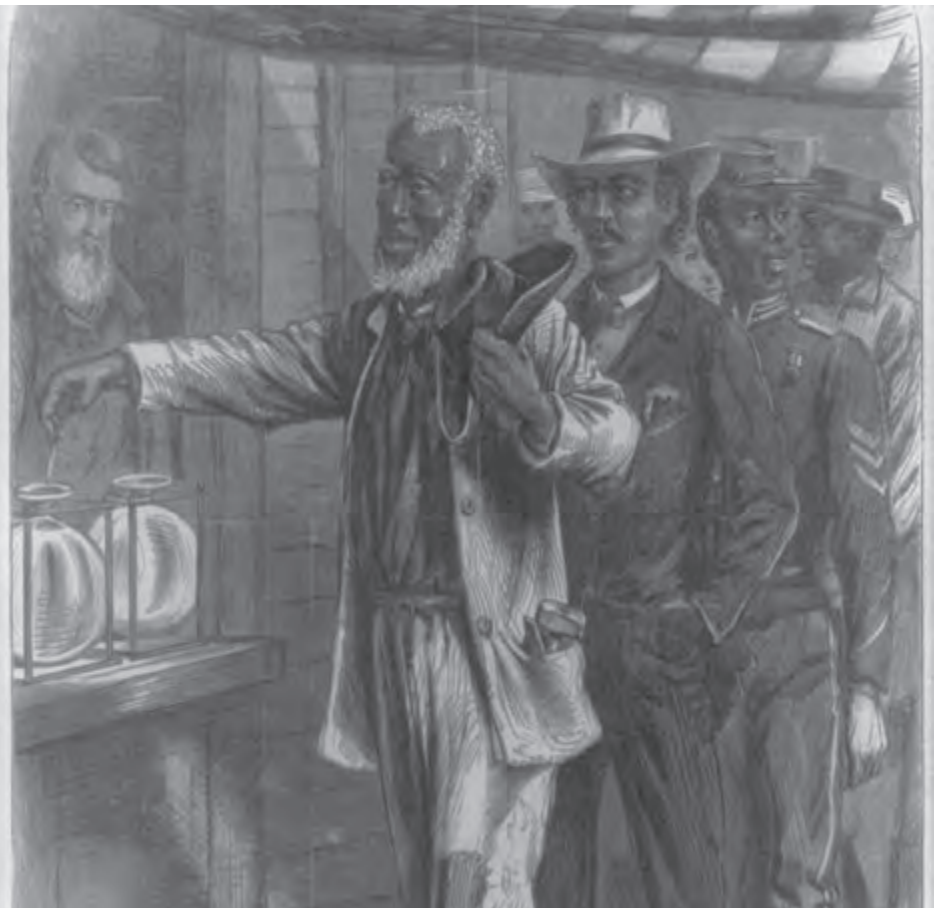
Programs like the one at the University of Texas reflect the dilution and distortion of affirmative action over time from its original purpose to combat systematic discrimination against African-Americans, other oppressed national minorities and women, which strengthened the unity of the working class. At first affirmative action with enforceable quotas helped batter down a century of racial and sexual discrimination that blocked millions from whole industries, jobs and colleges.

But as the battles that won these gains receded, the capitalist rulers began backtracking on quotas. They were declared unconstitutional in 1978, in a Supreme Court upholding a challenge by Allan Bakke, a Caucasian college student, to affirmative action quotas at the University of California at Davis medical school.

Today, affirmative action has more and more been channeled into “diversity” programs aimed at advancing a “chosen few” into bourgeois-minded professional layers, including the military officer corps, as part of advancing the maintenance of stable social relations under capitalism.

The diversity program at the University of Texas is a good example. In defending its program, the school says without it they will be forced to deny admission to some “elite” students, losing “the African-American or Hispanic child of successful professionals.”

Working people need to fight for desegregation of schools and housing, and



Woodcut “The First Vote” by Alfred R. Waud, printed in *Harper’s Weekly* in 1867. Out of revolutionary victory in U.S. Civil War, African-Americans won right to vote, which was gutted by defeat of Radical Reconstruction in 1876 and subsequent imposition of Jim Crow. Voting Rights Act of 1965 was gain of massive proletarian struggle for Black rights in 1950s through ’70s.

affirmative action quotas in hiring and jobs, to strengthen the unity of our class.

1965 Voting Rights Act

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was another conquest of the mighty civil rights struggles of the 1950s and ’60s.

After the 1865 defeat of the Southern slavocracy in the Civil War, Blacks won the right to vote. “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude,” Congress decreed in the 15th Amendment to the Constitution in 1870.

But after the federal government withdrew union troops as part of the overthrow of Radical Reconstruction in 1876, state governments across the South, backed by the Ku Klux Klan and other extralegal racist gangs, enacted laws to impose strict racial segregation. Imposing Jim Crow by force and violence, they used everything from literacy tests to violent assault and lynching to eradicate the right of Blacks to vote.

Winning and extending the right to vote has been a hard-fought struggle by working people since the founding of the country, including fights to eliminate property qualifications and the fight for women’s suffrage.

Passage of the federal Voting Rights Act helped concretize what the overthrow of Jim Crow had accomplished — barring literacy tests, poll taxes and all other tools used by racist governments and parties to prevent Blacks from voting or running for office.

On June 25 the Supreme Court ruled on a challenge from Shelby County in Alabama that one section of the Act was unconstitutional. It did not touch the heart of the Act, which outlaws any discrimination in voting.

The section overturned contained a decades-old formula requiring certain state and local governments, including nine states in the South, to seek federal government approval before changing any election procedures.

Areas covered by the measures were those where “literacy and knowledge tests, good moral character requirements, the need for vouchers from registered voters, and the like” were in place and that had “less than 50 percent voter registration or turnout in the 1964

Presidential election.” It was defended as an extreme but necessary measure, initially to last for five years.

Since then Congress has extended the provision numerous times, most recently in 2006 when President George W. Bush signed bipartisan legislation to maintain it through 2031.

But, the Supreme Court said, each extension was based on the facts as they stood in 1965. These conditions no longer exist, the court ruled. Registration rates for Blacks and Caucasians are roughly equal in all the areas covered by the provision. There has been a “1,000 percent increase since 1965 in the number of African-American elected officials” in the areas covered by the act.

The court held that in the future Congress could put state and local governments under the federal approval requirements, but only on the basis of current, not decades-old, facts.

The Black rights battles of the 1950s, ’60s and ’70s that ended Jim Crow segregation did much more than deal a blow to voter disenfranchisement of African-Americans. Among the most important consequences, it opened the door to the decline of racist attitudes within the working class and to a deepening fraternization and sense of solidarity among working people of all backgrounds, overcoming the massive and lasting blow of the bloody defeat of Radical Reconstruction in the closing decades of the 19th Century.

In recent years, many efforts to use this section of the Voting Rights Act have focused on questions like redistricting, which have more than anything been an arena for jockeying between the Democratic and Republican parties seeking electoral advantage.

At the same time, in some areas concrete anti-working-class voter restrictions — which fall disproportionately on workers who are Black — have not only been maintained but in some cases expanded, from the imposition of photo identification requirements to denial of the right to vote for “felons.”

Two days after its voting rights decision, the Supreme Court vacated a federal court bar on a voter ID law in Texas, the most stringent in the country. Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott announced the anti-working-class law “will take effect immediately.”

Militant Fund

Continued from page 3

wrote that two coworkers at the Peugeot factory in Poissy gave a total of more than \$70 to the fund. Both read *Militant* articles translated into French that are posted on the *Militant* website.

“This is a real encouragement to continue the weekly translation of *Militant* articles,” said Salfati.

There are still a few days left. If you would like to contribute, contact distributors listed on page 8, or send a check or money order made out to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018 to arrive by July 9.

The final scoreboard will be posted in the next issue.

<i>Militant Fighting Fund</i>			
May 4 - July 2 (week 7)			
Country	Quota	Paid	%
UNITED STATES			
Des Moines	\$2,600	\$2,646	102%
Lincoln	\$200	\$203	102%
New York	\$20,000	\$20,254	101%
Seattle	\$8,500	\$8,581	101%
San Francisco	\$13,500	\$12,887	95%
Los Angeles	\$8,500	\$7,800	92%
Twin Cities	\$5,500	\$4,985	91%
Boston	\$3,500	\$2,995	86%
Miami	\$3,000	\$2,564	85%
Atlanta	\$9,000	\$7,409	82%
Omaha	\$600	\$431	72%
Chicago	\$9,500	\$6,700	71%
Washington	\$7,800	\$5,369	69%
Philadelphia	\$4,300	\$2,829	66%
Houston	\$4,000	\$2,367	59%
Other		\$1,250	
Total U.S.	\$100,500	\$89,270	89%
CANADA*	\$7,500	\$7,500	100%
NEW ZEALAND	\$5,500	\$5,510	100%
AUSTRALIA*	\$1,950	\$2,000	103%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	\$2,000	\$2,515	126%
Manchester	\$600	\$770	128%
Total U.K.	\$2,600	\$3,285	126%
FRANCE	\$350	\$398	114%
Total	\$118,400	\$107,963	91%
Should be	\$118,000	\$103,250	88%
*Raised Quota			

ON THE PICKET LINE

Expanded picket backs striking Wash. Machinists

AUBURN, Wash. — Members of Machinists Local 79 on strike at Belshaw Adamatic, a manufacturer of bakery equipment here, held an expanded picket line and cookout June 18 that drew 175 unionists and other supporters throughout the day. The local's 62 members have been on strike since March 25.

"I have to be here on the picket line," Hari Shankar, a Local 79 member at Belshaw Adamatic who was hit by a scab truck some weeks ago and is recovering, told the *Militant*. "We have strength in numbers."

"Here today we had representatives of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 19, Teamsters Local 117, IAM District Lodge 751, Organize Workers Labor Solidarity, the Democratic Party, a candidate for Auburn city council, a representative of the Martin Luther King County Labor Council and others," Cliff LaPlant, shop steward of Local 79 told the *Militant*. "We may be small but our brothers and sisters are many and standing with us."

Workers say Belshaw Adamatic is seeking to cut back company costs for workers' health care and use subcontractors and temporary workers to weaken the union and lower wages.

"When we are on strike we have to support each other. That's the whole point of being in a union," Kenda McKinzey, member of IAM District 751 at Boeing in Everett, told the *Militant*. "You can do better with a group in a union than on your own."

Tom Wroblewski, president of District 751, which represents Boeing workers, donated a \$1,000 check to Local 79's strike fund. "There are more than 30,000 members standing right behind you," he said.

— Mary Martin

SF Giants concession workers fight for raise, against takeaways

SAN FRANCISCO — "Enjoy the game, but no fries, no lemonade, no peanuts, no food!" ballpark concession worker Anthony Wendleberger told fans as they streamed into the San Francisco Giant's AT&T Park for a game with the San Diego Padres June 18.

Several hundred picketed the game demanding a raise and a contract for 750 concession workers, members of UNITE HERE Local 2.

"The biggest issues are job security and health care," said Wendleberger, who works at the park in food preparation.

Centerplate, the San Francisco Giants' food and beverage subcontractor, wants to increase the number of games a worker must work before getting health care coverage. Workers are also seeking guarantees that they will be able to maintain their jobs and contract terms if the Giants change food companies.

Centerplate spokesperson Sam Singer said that the company is bargaining in good faith, offering a 1.7 percent wage increase, CBS reported. Concession workers are paid between \$15 and \$20 per hour, according to Singer.

Flyers being handed out by the workers point out that with two recent World Series championships under their belt, ticket prices are up 20 percent, beer prices up 13 percent and the Giants' earnings up by \$57 million. Yet wages for the workers have been frozen since 2009.

"I support the workers," said Dafna Wu, a fan who stopped with her children

to talk on her way into the game. "Too much of the money is going to the top."

Several dozen picketers bought tickets to the game and staged a sit-down protest inside the ballpark near the Gilroy Garlic Fries stand. Ten were cited for trespassing and arrested.

—Betsey Stone

Stockholm bus drivers strike to defend seniority rights

STOCKHOLM — "There is massive support for our strike," said Bus driver Björn Jirdén at the picket line at the Råsta bus depot on the outskirts of Stockholm. "One woman told me, 'I would rather walk all the way to Kiruna. You have to win your fight,'" as she stopped by the picket line during her long trek to work.

One thousand bus drivers organized by the Kommunal union struck June 19. Five days later, 400 more walked out in several places around the country. The union vows to escalate the fight further if the bosses don't back down.

The bus operators association wants to take away all seniority rights



Militant/Mary Martin

Machinists Local 79 and supporters picket Belshaw Adamatic in Auburn, Wash., June 18.

when a new subcontractor takes over a service. Similar to the school bus drivers in New York, workers would have to be rehired as a new worker with no seniority, at entry-level wages and a probationary period. The bosses also want shorter paid breaks and the elimination of the 11-hour minimum

daily rest period.

The bosses want to do the same kind of things to other workers in Sweden that they are doing to the bus workers, said Fillipos Kvavatsiklis. "It is not just our rights that we are fighting for. This concerns all of society."

— Dag Tirsén

'Cuba and Africa' in Greek presented at Athens meeting

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece — About 35 people participated in a panel discussing two books on Cuba's contribution to the anti-colonial struggle in Africa. One is *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own*, published by Pathfinder Press in English and Spanish, which includes speeches and interviews by Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, Nelson Mandela and the Cuban Five. The other is *Cuba and Africa*, a recently released book in Greek by Diethnes Vima that contains selections by Castro and Mandela published in *Cuba and Angola*.

The meeting, held at the Greek Cuban Friendship Association headquarters, was hosted by the Ghanaian Community in Greece and Diethnes Vima.

"The history of Cuba's contribution to liberation in Africa began in 1963 with the Algerian people's struggle against French colonialism, continues with Che's participation in the fight in

the Congo and culminates with hundreds of thousands of Cuban volunteer combatants in Angola to help beat back the attempt by white-supremacist South Africa to conquer the newly independent country," said Nikos Karandreas, president of the Greek Cuban Friendship Association.

"Cuba's selfless solidarity is unprecedented in the history of Africa, where another people would rise to our defense, would place all its resources in the fight with no material gain for themselves," said Samsideen Iddrisu, of the Ghanaian Community, who chaired the event.

"Three of those Cuban volunteers who fought for our freedom in Angola are today in U.S. jails," said Iddrisu. "I urge everyone to join in the fight to free the Cuban Five." (See "Who are the Cuban Five?" on page 7.)

"As Fidel said in this book, if you can't fight for the freedom of others you can't fight for your own. We are discuss-

ing here an historic example of working-class solidarity beyond borders," said Natasha Terlexi, representing Diethnes Vima. "The Cuban Revolution shows that there is an alternative as working people face the consequences of the worldwide capitalist crisis."

Vaggelis Gonatas, Cuba de Corazon blogger, talked about the experience of being part of international volunteer brigades in Cuba. "You start to discover that Cuban society has in fact created a different type of person," he said.

"This was an act of tremendous heroism for our people," said Osvaldo Jesús Cobacho Martínez, Cuban Ambassador to Greece. "Cuba, only 90 miles from the U.S., was itself under constant threat from Washington. Yet we did not flinch in sending decisive aid to Angola."

Eight copies of *Cuba and Africa* and four copies of *Cuba and Angola* were sold in the process of building and holding the event.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



July 15, 1988

The cover story issued by the Pentagon and the Reagan administration to justify the July 3 shooting down of Iran Air Flight 655 is coming apart. What were initially presented as facts are now being contradicted as more of the truth comes out.

The Airbus plane was destroyed over Iranian waters by missiles fired from the USS *Vincennes*, one of the 27 warships that the U.S. government has stationed in the region. The 290 people killed included 66 children.

The Iran Air flight was a regularly scheduled civilian shuttle from the Iranian coastal city of Bandar Abbas to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, across the Persian Gulf.

President Ronald Reagan described the firing of a missile at the civilian airliner as "a proper defensive action." He later expressed "deep regret" in a letter sent to the Iranian government.



July 22, 1963

A unique incident in the current struggle for Negro equality demonstrates the power of mass action—the kind of action it is going to take to shake up the white power structure in the U.S. and get some meaningful civil-rights legislation out of congress. The incident occurred in Cambridge, Maryland, on the night of July 11. Some 300 persons had demonstrated for civil rights on the courthouse steps and had been pelted with eggs by white racists. They maintained order and were returning to the Negro section of town when 17-year-old William Jackson, was arrested by state police for "carrying a paring knife."

As word of this spread a huge crowd of Negroes formed and began marching on the armory where young Jackson was being held. The police released the prisoner, who was then hoisted to the shoulders of his comrades and carried away in jubilation.



July 16, 1938

Japan's attempt to establish its imperialist domination over China by force of arms has already been proved, in this first year, to be an adventure hopelessly doomed to defeat. China's vastness, Japan's frailty, and the struggle for power among the great imperialist nations of the world, all spell defeat for the ambitious robber who is seeking, belatedly, to imitate his older imperialist brothers in the game of conquest.

Not even from the military point of view can Japan boast of any important achievement in this year of warfare, especially when we consider the inferiority of Chinese military equipment and the even more important fact that the present bourgeois leadership in China has not dared to draw on the real resources that lie in the Chinese masses for resistance and counterattack.

Thousands march in Turkey in support of Kurdish rights

BY SUSAN LAMONT

In a powerful show of support for the rights of the Kurdish people in Turkey, thousands of Kurds — joined by Turkish workers, students and others — marched in Istanbul June 29.

They were protesting the death of Medeni Yildirim, an 18-year-old Kurd shot the previous day by government forces in the Lice district of Diyarbakir, the main city in the predominantly Kurdish area of southeastern Turkey. Yildirim was killed and 10 others wounded when police opened fire on a protest against a new gendarmerie outpost being built in Lice.

Demonstrations demanding an end to the government's expansion of military outposts in the Kurdish region also took place June 29-30 in Ankara and other cities. Demands included the release of imprisoned Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Ocalan and other political prisoners, education in the Kurdish language and removal of all barriers to its use, and an easing of requirements to enter parliament.

The Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), the main pro-Kurdish party in Turkey, has called for one month of what are being called "government, take a step" rallies, to press Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to follow through on recognition of the Kurdish people's national rights following the cease-fire negotiated earlier this year with the outlawed PKK. The agreement ended decades of military conflict between the PKK and Turkish government in which more than 40,000 have died.

"Someone who wants peace does not waste time building outposts," BDP leader Sirri Sureyya Onder told the Istanbul marchers, according to the English-language *Hurriyet Daily News*. "Citilians expressing their outcry in a peaceful way were fired upon. All their wounds were on their back. Peace won't come this way."

The Kurds are an oppressed nationality of some 25 to 30 million people concentrated in southeastern Turkey, northwest Iran, northern Iraq and northeast Syria. About half live in Turkey, where they face the highest rates of illiteracy and poverty in the country. The March cease-fire agreement registered gains for the Kurdish people and a political opening for toilers in the region.

The latest demonstrations on behalf of Kurdish rights won support from many Turks who took part in the large anti-government protests that swept

Turkey in June. Those demonstrations — which were sparked by a government crackdown on protests against a planned government redevelopment project in Taksim Gezi Park in Istanbul — raised demands for an end to government repression, more democratic rights, protections for national and religious minorities and women, and more rights for workers and unions. The protests were met by riot police using tear gas and water cannons, with at least four people killed, thousands wounded and hundreds arrested.

"In the big cities, the struggle of the Kurdish people and that of the Turkish people are becoming one," said Samil Altan, a leader of the recently formed People's Democratic Party, in a July 1 telephone interview from Istanbul. "A new wave of people came into political



Oren Ziv/Activestills.org

March in Istanbul June 29 to protest killing of 18-year-old Medeni Yildirim by police who opened fire on protest against expansion of outposts in Kurdish areas. Demonstrations for Kurdish rights are being organized on heels of widespread anti-government protests. Kurdish people are pressing for language rights, release of political prisoners and other demands.

life with the Taksim protests. The workers and others who demonstrated on the past weekend were not only protesting against the killing of Yildirim, but to

show their solidarity with the Kurdish struggle. More and more, the Turkish people see what the Kurds have been fighting against."

Anti-government mobilizations shake Egypt

Continued from front page

mand is presenting itself as "defender of the people," standing above the deepening conflicts between the workers, farmers and their allies on the one hand and the propertied rulers — themselves divided between the military and Muslim Brotherhood — on the other.

Hundreds of thousands gathered at Cairo's Tahrir Square June 30. Egypt's daily *al-Ahram* reports on its English-language website millions participated in protests across the country July 2.

In Cairo, Morsi's opponents trashed and burned the Muslim Brotherhood headquarters, while the police and army did nothing. Police later arrested 15 Muslim Brotherhood armed guards after an exchange of fire.

The June 30 protest was called by Tamarod (Rebel), a new youth group, which says it has collected 22 million signatures on a petition calling for Morsi's removal and presidential elections.

"We reject you because the deprived still have no place," the petition says, "because no justice has been brought to the martyrs ... because the economy has collapsed and depends only on begging ... because Egypt is still following the footsteps of the USA."

Fear over reverberations of the popular mobilizations are gripping the capitalist rulers of the region and beyond. In Tunisia, the cradle of the "Arab Spring," young people have formed a Tamarod group that seeks to organize a similar movement. In Turkey, thousands are simultaneously in the streets backing Kurdish rights. Officials of the government in Israel voice concern of "instability in a big and influential neighboring country." And oil prices are rising amid trepidations over the reliability of trade routes through the Suez Canal.

On July 1 the military high command gave Morsi and the opposition 48 hours "to come to a consensus and get out of the crisis." If they don't, the army will announce its own "road map for the future and the steps for overseeing its implementation."

Tamarod leaders welcomed the deadline and said in a statement that "the army's historic role is to take the side of the people."

Under pressure, Foreign Minister Mo-

ammed Kamel Amr, several cabinet members and administration spokesmen resigned July 1-2. On the night of July 2 Morsi said he was willing to "pay with my life to protect the legitimacy" of his election and the Muslim Brotherhood-drafted constitution.

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces removed Mubarak from power in February 2011 after weeks of popular protest. Morsi was elected president in June 2012.

Under Mubarak the army and police persecuted and arrested Muslim Brotherhood supporters. After winning the elections, the new Brotherhood government began organizing to push the working class, the burgeoning union movement and the masses back on the sidelines. At the same time, it tried to curb the power of the military, which has remained, with a lower profile, the main pillar of bourgeois rule.

After taking office, relations between the Brotherhood and the high command was a tug-of-war of compromises and conflicts. Morsi forced the retirement of Field Marshal Mohamed Tantawi as head of the Supreme Council, but also pushed through a new constitution that protected the military's power.

Workers press demands for unions

Working people took advantage of the space opened with the removal of Mubarak — and the power struggle among competing factions of the capitalist class that ensued — to press their demands for the right to organize unions and for higher wages and better working conditions. They ignored repeated calls first by the military junta and then by Morsi to halt the work stoppages.

According to the Cairo-based International Development Centre, protest actions now average 1,140 a month, compared to 176 a month during the last year of Mubarak's reign and 500 a month at the beginning of this year. There have been thousands of strikes, sit-ins, marches and other workers' actions over the last two years.

Capitalist corporations have responded to the waves of labor actions by boycotting investment in production, which is at its lowest level since records began in 1980, according to the International

Monetary Fund.

The investment boycott has exacerbated the effects of the world capitalist economic crisis. Independent trade union leaders say that 4,000 factories have shut down since Mubarak's fall. Official unemployment is 12.5 percent.

Some 40 percent of Egypt's population gets by on \$2 a day or less. Food prices have been skyrocketing — flour and sugar have jumped 50 percent in the last year — and many working people depend on government subsidized bread sold at less than one cent, as well as subsidized rice, oil and sugar to survive.

"The Morsi government has not solved any problems since it came to power," Fatma Ramadan, a spokesperson for the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions, told the *Militant* by phone July 1. She cited the example of the Portland Cement Company in Alexandria, where a sit-in by striking temporary workers demanding permanent work was broken up Feb. 17 by police, who arrested more than 100.

The opposition to Morsi is heterogeneous and includes everything from trade unions and groups that call themselves socialist to the main capitalist opposition political parties and supporters of deposed dictator Mubarak.

"We are with the demands to remove Morsi by the military forces," said Mohamad Ahmad Salem, a spokesperson for the Egyptian Democratic Labor Confederation, in a phone interview from Mahalla El Kubra. "We cannot live under the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood. This system destroyed the country and the workers."

The Committee of the Students of June 30, which includes representatives from the Socialist Popular Alliance, the Student Union of American University and the Revolutionary Movement of the British University in Cairo, said they are for a "national unity government" to replace Morsi until new elections are held.

If the military takes power again, "it will be a black day for Egyptian workers," Ramadan said. "But what makes me patient is that the people will go out to the streets again and again."

Bashar Abu-Saifan in Beirut, Lebanon, contributed to this article.



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Coalition of Black Trade Unionists calls on US gov't to free Cuban 5

BY SUSAN LAMONT

The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists approved a resolution at its 42nd International Convention May 22-27 calling on Congress to release the Cuban Five, repeal restrictions on travel from the U.S. to Cuba and end Washington's economic and trade embargo against the island.

Some 1,000 delegates and guests attended the gathering in Orlando, Fla. The CBTU describes itself as the "independent voice of black workers within the trade union movement." Founded in 1972, it currently has 50 chapters in the U.S. and one in Canada.

"The CBTU has taken up the embargo against Cuba since 1981, but this was our first discussion of the case of the Cuban Five," said Harold Rogers, in a June 28 telephone interview with the *Militant*. Rogers is chair of the CBTU's International Affairs Committee and author of the resolution on the Cuban Five, which was submitted to the convention by the Chicago CBTU chapter.

Santos Crespo, president of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 372 and a delegate from the New York CBTU chapter, urged delegates to support the resolution. Local 372 helped build the

recent "Five Days for the Cuban 5" activities held in Washington, D.C., May 30-June 5.

Crespo started his comments by talking about Washington's decades-long economic and trade embargo aimed at overthrowing the Cuban government. "Fifty-plus years have passed and that has not succeeded, but the Cuban people have suffered as a result," he said.

"The people of Cuba happen to be content with what goes on in terms of the government structure. Who are we to tell them that we don't like your government structure," said Crespo.

"I'm Puerto Rican. For us, Cuba is an extension of who we are," Crespo continued. "I know my DNA is both Taíno and African, and that many Cubans feel the same way. Many Dominicans feel the same way. Many of those islands in the Caribbean feel the same way."

"These were five brothers that volunteered to come here," Crespo said, describing aspects of the Cuban Five's mission. "Cuba, since 1959, has been the victim of more terrorist attacks than any other country in the world. It has lost over 3,000 people as a result."

Another delegate, El Shabazz from Washington, D.C., suggested includ-

Resolution Approved by Coalition of Black Trade Unionists at 42nd International Convention, May 25, 2013

Support the Repeal of the U.S. Travel Restrictions to Cuba and the U.S. Economic Embargo

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists supports the efforts to end the travel restrictions on Americans seeking to visit Cuba, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That CBTU call upon Congress to initiate legislation that would repeal the economic and political embargo against the Republic of Cuba and broaden diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuba, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That CBTU call upon the Cuban government to release all political prisoners, including trade unionists, and that the U.S. government release the Cuban Four being held in the U.S. and enter into a dialogue with regard to broadening human and workers rights.

Who are the Cuban Five?

Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the activities of Cuban-American counterrevolutionary groups operating in southern Florida. These paramilitary outfits, organizing on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other deadly attacks, both against targets in Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the United States, Puerto Rico and elsewhere.

On Sept. 12, 1998, the five were arrested by the FBI. They were framed up and convicted on a variety of charges, which included acting as unregistered agents of the Cuban government and possession of false identity documents. Without a shred of evidence, three were charged with "conspiracy to gather and transmit national defense information."

Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder based on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government's 1996 shoot-down of two aircraft flown by the counterrevolutionary group Brothers to the Rescue that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana's repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years. His wife, Adriana Pérez, is barred from entering the United States.

All but René González remain in prison. In October 2011 he began serving a three-year "supervised release." On the pretext of his dual citizenship, his request to return to Cuba had been denied until May 3, when Judge Joan Lenard finally agreed that if González renounced his U.S. citizenship, he could stay in Cuba.



Some 1,000 delegates took part in Coalition of Black Trade Unionists 42nd International Convention in Orlando, Fla., May 22-27. Gathering approved resolution calling on U.S. government to release Cuban Five and end economic embargo against Cuba.

ing in the resolution support for Assata Shakur, a former Black Panther Party member who was framed up for the 1973 murder of a New Jersey state trooper, escaped prison in 1979 and was granted political asylum in Cuba. Shakur was added to the FBI's "Most Wanted Terrorists" list May 2.

"I agree with the sentiment," said Rogers, "but in terms of this particular resolution, I think we should let it stand as it is."

The resolution passed unanimously. "We want to work with the 55 local chapters to urge them to take up the res-

Prison officials deny Lynne Stewart appeal for compassionate release

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Prison authorities have rejected a request for compassionate release for jailed attorney Lynne Stewart, who has been diagnosed with lung cancer that has spread to her lymph nodes and back. Stewart, 73, is a criminal defense lawyer who often took cases other attorneys shunned for political and career reasons and defended working people who could not afford typical lawyers' fees.

"While setting up for our daily demonstration and vigil in front of the White House June 24, Lynne called and read me a letter she had received from Kathleen Kenney, general counsel for the Federal Bureau of Prisons in Washington, D.C., denying her application for compassionate release," Stewart's husband Ralph Poynter told the *Militant* in a phone interview June 28.

"This three-paragraph letter is full of lies," Poynter said. "It says Lynne is improving. She is not. She's back in quarantine for the second time with a low white blood cell count, putting her at risk for generalized infection."

In recent months, thousands have signed an online petition requesting compassionate release for Stewart.

"We thought we had passed the most

olution," Rogers told the *Militant*. "One thing a local CBTU chapter can do is hook up with a Cuban Five committee or Cuba solidarity committee in their area. We also want to get information about the case of the Cuban Five and the resolution to local union members."

Rogers suggested CBTU chapters could publish information in their newsletters about the international campaign to free the Five.

"We hope the resolution on the Cuban Five will be taken to the AFL-CIO convention in Los Angeles in September," said Rogers.

difficult hurdles," said Poynter. The prison warden at Carswell in Fort Worth, Texas, had signed for her release, and so did Charles Samuels, director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, "but the prison bureau delayed issuing a response."

Every day she's held in prison, puts Stewart further behind in obtaining needed medical treatment, Poynter said.

Stewart has been in jail since November 2009 on trumped-up charges for violating Special Administrative Measures that shut off communication with the outside world for prisoners designated as "terrorists." The measures — set up after Sept. 11, 2001 — were imposed on her client Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman, a blind Muslim cleric convicted in 1995 of "seditious conspiracy" for alleged links to a plot to bomb the United Nations and assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

For facilitating a press release to Reuters from Abdel-Rahman commenting on a cease-fire between the Islamic Group and the U.S.-backed Mubarak dictatorship, Stewart was convicted of "providing material support to a terrorist organization" and other lesser charges. Two men of Egyptian origin, Ahmed Sattar and Mohammed Yousry, were convicted on similar charges for the press release.

Judge John Koeltl initially sentenced Stewart to 28 months in prison. On appeal, the judge increased her prison term to 10 years because of statements she made to supporters and the press outside the courtroom following her original sentencing — a vindictive move and blow against free speech.

"Our next step is a last ditch effort to go back to Judge Koeltl" and ask him to overturn the prison authorities' rejection of compassionate release, said Poynter.



Militant/Róger Calero

Lynne Stewart addresses supporters after being sentenced to prison in 2006.

‘Battle of ideas’ counters influence of capitalist values in Cuba

Below is an excerpt from Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for July. Through interviews, generals Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui and Moisés Sío Wong describe their experiences as combatants in the 1956-58 revolutionary war that brought down the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship, opening the door to the socialist revolution in the Americas. Copyright © 2005 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MOISÉS SÍO WONG

Defenders of capitalism seek to impose their culture, their ideas, on everyone. They strip peoples all over the world of our own cultures. The imperialists possess supremacy in technology and science. Some they've developed, some they've stolen. They dominate the media and information systems worldwide, through which they attempt to impose their values and justify their social relations.

This is why the Battle of Ideas is so important and so complex. Our ability to wage this battle rests largely on education, on instruction, on culture. On the example we provide children and young people.

We're now beginning another revo-



Top, Angel González Baldrich/Granma; Inset, Militant/Jonathan Silberman

“Capitalism seeks to impose its culture, its ideas and values on all the peoples of the world. This is why the Battle of Ideas that our people are waging is of the utmost importance,” said Moisés Sío Wong. Top, youth through volunteer labor renovate schools and help build new ones. Inset, preuniversity class for workers at Camilo Cienfuegos sugar mill in Havana province, January 2003.

lution, this one in the education of our children. “One must be educated to be free,” as [José] Martí put it. How can our children, our young people, and consequently our men and women be truly free if they aren't educated to think for themselves? How can they contribute to the development of the country? The era of the manual, the blueprint is no more. We have to adjust things to our reality, and to the reality of the world today.

Before the revolution 95 percent of us here in Cuba, maybe more, considered ourselves anticommunists, even though we didn't know what socialism was. We were taught by comic books like Superman and Tarzan and Blackhawk. Blackhawk was one of our favorites. It was about a squadron of fighter pilots, and the characters included a Swede, a Frenchman, a Chinaman, a Pole. They made the Communists out to be really blood-thirsty. The Chinese character, a cook named Chop-Chop, was a racist caricature. That's the type of thing they taught us, even at school. We lived that on a daily basis.

There's a famous story from the early years of the revolution about a meeting Fidel held with some peasants and workers.

“Do you agree with the urban reform?” Fidel asked them.

“Yes.”

“Do you agree with the agrarian reform?”

“Yes.”

“Do you agree with the nationalization of industry?”

“Yes.”

“Do you agree with socialism?”

“Oh no, we don't agree with socialism!”

That's the way it used to be.

So what moment did Fidel choose to proclaim the socialist character of the revolution? He chose the opening of imperialism's attack on us at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961. It was then, as we buried our dead following the bombing of our airfields on April 15, that Fidel explained for the first time that our revolution is a socialist revolution. That air assault was the prelude to the mercenary invasion two days later. ...

Since the triumph of the revolution we've been educated in socialism. We've been educated in selflessness: to be capable even of giving our lives for another people. That's the highest expression of human selflessness.

I went to Angola to risk my life for the Angolan people's struggle. What material benefit was there in that? None. And that's how tens and tens of thousands went — teachers, doctors, specialists. They had to go through many difficulties, and in the most re-

mote places. How is this possible without consciousness?

But by the late 1990s there were 76,000 young people in Cuba who weren't going to school or working. As Fidel said, we had been remiss. The majority of these young people had family problems with divorced mothers and fathers, and so on. We had started categorizing them as “predelinquents.” This terminology was horrendous! How was it possible? They were born within the revolution. They are products of the revolution. They are our children. Their parents were the generation that had gone to Angola, to Nicaragua, and had given their lives for the revolution.

The truth is, there had been shortcomings in our educational work. There had been shortcomings in our political work. In our social work. We recognize this. I believe this is Fidel's genius — to recognize shortcomings and to take measures to correct them. And not lose a minute in the process.

With the opening of the Battle of Ideas, all these young people were encouraged to study, and they received a salary while doing so. The vast majority now believe they have a socially useful future. ...

We subsidize a number of items that everyone in Cuba has equal access to. Everyone receives medicines free of charge. Anyone here can have heart surgery without somebody asking about their bank account. Everyone receives education free of charge. Our social security not only provides retirement income for every single citizen but also covers disability, maternity, and pregnancy leave. Some friends criticize us for maintaining these programs. But we're demonstrating how much can be done with very limited economic resources. The key thing is the human resources.

This battle we're engaged in is undoubtedly complex, but it's vital. You have to see how our children, our young people express themselves, their political level. We want to spread that as widely as possible, to make culture and education mass activities, to defend our national identity, our socialist identity. Above all, we want to teach young people to think.

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Build defense campaign to free the 5!

Continued from front page

find themselves on the front lines of the class struggle in the U.S. and conduct themselves accordingly. Like millions of workers, they’ve been run through the “justice system” of cops, courts and jails. Working people in the U.S. face a plea-bargain expressway to prison, mandatory sentences, lockdown and “solitary,” and conditions aimed at corroding their morale, sense of self-worth and human solidarity.

René González explains that when the Five tell fellow prisoners why they refused to cop a plea with U.S. prosecutors and courts, they win respect for standing up for what they believe and for the socialist revolution they defend. González was released last year after 14 years, and is now back in Cuba after international defense efforts pushed back punitive steps by Washington to make him stay in the U.S. three years on probation.

As shown earlier this summer by the “5 Days for the Cuban 5” — the most successful defense activities so far in the U.S. — there are growing opportunities to organize meetings and events of all kinds to win support for this worldwide campaign. These include working with others to organize broadly sponsored exhibits of the political cartoons of Gerardo Hernández and works by Antonio Guerrero — the latest of which features a collection of 15 watercolors, one for each of the 15 years since

the arrests, entitled “I will die the way I lived.”

We need to reach out to unions, Black rights organizations, Puerto Rican groups, opponents of deportations and other targeting of immigrants, church-related human rights organizations, and other labor, political and social rights groups.

The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists voted to join the fight at their May convention (see page 7). The United Steelworkers union in Canada, one of the country’s largest labor organizations, unanimously adopted a resolution in April. John McCullough, executive director of Church World Services, has called on Washington to release the Five. Supporters of the campaign to win freedom for Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López Rivera are linking their efforts to those for the Five.

The integrity, dignity and steadfastness that marks the political conduct of the Cuban Five and their relations with others inspires such support — *if* their supporters are able to make the facts more and more widely known.

Join with others to broaden support for this international defense campaign. Order copies of *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free* to spread the word.

It is along this road, as Gerardo Hernández has said, that the “jury of millions” will be built that will win their freedom.

Classes set for active workers educational conference

BY LOUIS MARTIN

With the opening session two weeks away, the Active Workers Educational Conference organized by the Socialist Workers Party July 19-20 in Oberlin, Ohio, is taking shape.

The two-day gathering will bring together members of the SWP and Communist Leagues in other countries, supporters of the communist movement, and other workers who’ve been reading and helping circulate the *Militant* and communist books and pamphlets, and building solidarity with workers engaged in struggles against bosses’ assaults and other fights.

The conference will discuss stepped-up efforts to build the worldwide defense campaign to free the Cuban Five, as well as Socialist Workers Party election campaigns that set an example of independent working-class political action. All this strengthens circulation of the *Militant* and books through door-to-door sales in working-class neighborhoods, which forms the foundation of the weekly activity of the SWP and Communist Leagues .

One aspect that is underway is preparations for five classes that will complement the main political presentations by party leaders. The following are working titles to whet the appetite:

— Contradictions and Openings in Working-Class Politics Today: “We” and “They,” the SWP Federal Electoral Commission Victory, and the Meritocracy vs. a Lifetime of Learning and Labor.

— A Crisis Rooted in Production and Trade, Not Money and Banks: Why Washington’s “Visible Hand,” Whether Monetary or Fiscal, Won’t Stop the

Anti-labor Lash of Capitalism’s “Invisible Hand.”

— Sharpening Contradictions and Conflicts for Latin America’s Capitalist Rulers and Their Pressures on Workers and Farmers of Cuba: Class Struggle in Venezuela, Brazil and Beyond; the “Bolivarian” (Social Democratic) Alternative; and the Myth of U.S. Rulers’ “Failed Cuba Policy.”

— From Turkey to Egypt and Syria: Imperialism’s “20th Century” Middle East Order Is Unraveling: Toilers Need Political Space to Organize and Act in Face of Bourgeois Regimes, Islamist Forces, Imperialist-Drawn Borders.

— Why Class Not Race Is the Decisive Question in Cuba: The Fight to Deepen the Revolution’s Proletarian Course vs. the Meritocracy’s Pressure for “Economic Liberation.”

A list of suggested preparatory class readings will be sent to conference participants ahead of the gathering.

The closing panel and rally July 20 will feature the political work conference participants will be carrying out together coming out of the conference.

This includes participation in the Continental Conference in Solidarity with Cuba in Caracas, Venezuela, July 24-27; petitioning to put SWP and Communist League candidates on the ballot; joining an August trip by Pathfinder supporters to Malaysia and Indonesia; and building the World Festival of Youth and Students in Ecuador in December.

For more information, call *Militant* distributors in your area (see directory on page 8) or contact us at (212) 244-4899 or themilitant@mac.com.

Texas abortion bill

Continued from front page

standards. A third provision would require doctors performing abortions in clinics to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals.

The historic 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court ruling that decriminalized abortion holds that states cannot interfere with a woman’s right to abortion until fetal viability, 24 to 28 weeks after pregnancy.

The following day the state senate voted to pass the bill, amid vocal protests by hundreds of supporters of women’s rights who crowded into the upstairs gallery. But Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst said he didn’t sign the bill until just after the midnight deadline because of the “unruly mob” in the state capitol.

Following the failure to get the measure passed before the midnight deadline, Gov. Rick Perry called a special session for July 1 to try again.

“If that bill passes, it would mean most abortion clinics in the state could be shut down,” Michael Cook, vice president of Texas National Organization for Women, told the *Militant* at a June 17 protest against the measure held at the Houston City Hall.

Twelve other states have passed laws banning abortion after 20 weeks. Courts have blocked the bans in three of the states — Arizona, Georgia and Idaho.

Meanwhile, the U.S. House of Representatives in a 228-196 vote passed a bill June 18 banning abortion after 22 weeks of pregnancy. The bill now goes to the U.S. Senate, where it is not expected to pass.

Jacquie Henderson from Houston contributed to this article.

SF transit strike

Continued from front page

ployees International Union Local 1021 and Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1555 did not reach an agreement with BART management as local television stations counted down to the contract expiration midnight, June 30. The system, which services 375,000 passenger trips per day, has been shut down tight since.

A lot of drivers were blowing their horns in support of the BART strikers at the picket line outside a maintenance facility in this town just south of San Francisco.

“We haven’t had a raise in five years,” station agent and ATU member Robinette Williams told the *Militant*. “We are the people that make the system work.”

“We doubled our wage increase offer,” BART spokesperson Alicia Trost told KQED radio July 1.

The unions proposed a 23 percent wage raise over four years. BART’s latest offer is 8 percent.

“They put a 5 percent wage increase on page one and take it away on page four,” said SEIU chief negotiator Josie Mooney on the KQED program. “And the other 3 percent is contingent on factors which they acknowledge won’t happen.”

The *San Jose Mercury News* editorialized July 1 that union demands were outrageous, setting the tone for bourgeois public opinion. “They complain that they have gone without raises for several years. So have many Bay Area workers, including many of the taxpayers and riders who pay BART salaries.” The paper complained about “out-of-control overtime,” and added, “As to union claims that this is all about safety — how stupid do they think the public is?”

The unions are arguing for stronger safety protections, including lighting in the tunnels, stations and parking lots. “In my seven years at BART, I’ve been assaulted three times,” said Williams. There were more than 100 physical assaults on BART employees at five stations over the last three years.

As to overtime, Williams added, “That’s a staffing issue. If we had adequate staffing there would be no overtime.”

Striking BART workers joined more than 1,000 Oakland city workers at a solidarity rally July 1. SEIU workers there were engaged in a one-day strike, shutting down libraries and other city departments.

“Every worker whether union or not deserves to be paid a good wage,” said Alain Hollie, a train operator and member of ATU Local 1555, who took part in the rally. “Our labor creates the wealth,” she said, answering the charge that BART workers are overpaid.

LETTERS

Paper’s fabulous

I’m presently incarcerated and came across your newspaper from the guy in the cell next to me and it’s fabulous! Please send me a subscription. I’d really enjoy it.

*A prisoner
Florida*

Source of knowledge

Your newspaper is a great source of knowledge that I have been using for the past two years to organize and hold study groups among others confined in solitary, where I

was locked for the past six years.

I am now out and living in the general population within a bigger environment that I am about to take total advantage of and do

what really needs to be done with a lot of these sleeping giants. That is to raise awareness and try to make a real change. Keep up the great work.

*A prisoner
Pennsylvania*

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the *Militant* and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.